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Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

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Tuesday, 16 April 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gasana	(Rwanda)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Shin Dong Ik
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Togo	Mr. M'Beou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2013/197)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2013/197)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/197, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mulet.

Mr. Mulet (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank the Security Council for this opportunity to present the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (S/2013/197). The report contains the conclusions and recommendations of an assessment mission, which I led, in Côte d'Ivoire last February.

As is underscored in the report, Côte d'Ivoire has made good progress since the post-electoral crisis and has now moved into a new phase of peacebuilding, achieved after considerable effort. There has been significant progress in Côte d'Ivoire since our assessment in February 2012, particularly in recent months with regard to the security situation in general.

However, the recent instability in the western part of the country, along the border with Liberia, makes clear the fragility of the situation. That instability includes at least one confirmed cross-border attack that, unfortunately, resulted in a number of deaths and injuries as well as the displacement of people, particularly in sensitive areas close to the border.

The report takes note of the decisive direction taken by President Ouattara to deal with the immediate security challenges, speed up economic recovery and initiate sensitive processes such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as reform of the security sector.

Although considerable challenges remain, the security situation in the border area with Liberia has improved significantly, following efforts at the highest level accompanied by strengthened cooperation between Abidjan and Monrovia at several levels, including with respect to the deployment of their national security forces along the border. The improvement in bilateral relations between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana has also had a positive impact on the security situation, including along their common border.

(*spoke in English*)

Since the report was issued, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia have taken further steps to enhance cross-border cooperation. On 5 April, in Monrovia, a quadripartite meeting was held that brought together the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, as well as UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). During the meeting, participants agreed to reinforce coordinated border patrolling, revive the tripartite refugee commission and hold meetings with local communities, authorities and traditional chiefs from both sides of the border. The two Governments' agreement on such specific deliverables is very positive and demonstrates the impact of their strengthened relations and contacts at several levels. UNOCI and UNMIL will continue to work closely in support of the respective Governments in addressing border security challenges.

The overall progress notwithstanding, Côte d'Ivoire continues to face significant threats to its peace and security. Some of the major threats identified include political dynamics and remaining deep divisions; the continued existence of networks affiliated with the former regime aimed at destabilizing the Government; the reported presence of mercenaries, former combatants and other armed elements along the border with Liberia; the uncontrolled circulation of weapons; the slow progress with regard to reconciliation and security-sector reform; halting progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; divisions within and among the security agencies; continued human rights violations by formal and informal security agencies

with impunity; and intercommunity violence, land conflicts and poverty. The incidence of sexual and gender-based violence remains of particular concern.

Local elections will be held on Sunday, 21 April. Preparations are under way with UNOCI providing limited support, including to planning efforts of the Independent Electoral Commission, as well as enhanced coordination with, and limited logistical assistance to, Ivorian security forces to ensure a peaceful conduct of the elections. The electoral campaign opened on 6 April and has been conducted relatively peacefully. Both President Ouattara's Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) party and the former President Bédié's Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire issued statements calling on their candidates to respect the Code of Good Conduct during the campaign period for the local elections. The former ruling Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) party chose not to participate in the elections, in spite of efforts to encourage them to occupy their legitimate political space.

As outlined in the report before the Council, the Government's gestures towards the opposition and its engagement in direct discussions are encouraging. Agreement was reportedly reached on a number of issues, including the need to return Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) to barracks; disarm unprofessional armed elements associated with the FRCI; equip the gendarmerie and police; protect opposition stakeholders; and end the illegal exploitation of land. Differences persist regarding the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and the FPI request for a general amnesty. It will be important that such discussions continue to pave the way for political reconciliation, which remains essential to ensuring lasting peace and stability and to moving critical processes forward, including security sector reform and DDR.

Progress on the complex issue of reconciliation and social cohesion remains slow. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission is struggling to complete its work and produce concrete results by 30 September, when its mandate expires. The national authorities have taken some steps to improve social cohesion, but local authorities lack sufficient resources to support such processes at their level.

As highlighted in the report before members, progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is essential to establish lasting peace and stability. DDR is a top priority for President Ouattara's Government. The establishment of the DDR Authority and the commencement of DDR operations are encouraging steps. To date, more than 4,000 former combatants have been disarmed and demobilized, some of whom are in the process of being employed in public-service positions. There is an expectation that progress will now accelerate more steadily. Following verification efforts by the Government, the estimated caseload of former combatants has been revised, from 110,000 to 64,000 combatants from both sides and among militias meeting the eligibility criteria.

In spite of the endorsement of the national security sector reform strategy by the National Security Council last year, the process remains at the planning stage. The reform of the security sector, while sensitive, is essential to ensure that Cote d'Ivoire has republican national security forces and a police and gendarmerie that fully assume their law-and-order responsibilities, ensure a secure and stable environment and protect civilian populations. It will be important that concrete steps be taken to fully implement the national security sector reform strategy.

In the light of those challenges and threats, the presence of UNOCI remains necessary, particularly with regard to its core priorities, namely, the protection of civilians, supporting security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as well as to help address border security challenges. However, adjustments to its structure, strengths and priorities are needed to meet the evolving situation on the ground. The Secretary-General therefore recommended reducing the authorized military strength of UNOCI, as previously decided by the Security Council, through the repatriation of one battalion by 31 July. At the same time, he recommended a further progressive reduction of two additional battalions by mid-2015. No reductions are recommended for the UNOCI police component.

Consequently, ongoing discussions with the Government on the development of benchmarks to measure and track progress towards the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire are an important opportunity for the Government and the United Nations to identify jointly minimum conditions that would allow UNOCI to begin drawing down. Those benchmarks will be included in the next report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

(*spoke in French*)

In conclusion, I should like to underscore the need to bring to justice those accused of having committed serious crimes, without regard for their status or political affiliation, so as to put an end to the vicious cycle of impunity and to build a culture of responsibility. There is also a need to step up efforts to promote reconciliation among communities and to address the underlying causes of conflict in the country.

The President: I thank Mr. Mulet for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/197) and would like to thank Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his outstanding briefing.

I should like to make several brief comments on certain points that my delegation deems essential.

As pointed out by Mr. Mulet, considerable progress has been made at all levels — especially with regard to stabilizing the security situation and as concerns the political dialogue, national reconciliation and economic revitalization — although major challenges remain that require pursuing the ongoing efforts.

With regard to the stabilization of the security situation, the Government is fully aware of the priority importance of managing the security situation given that consolidating the progress already made or anticipated in other sectors depends on stabilizing the security sector. Since the President of the Republic himself took control of the defence sector and with the establishment of the National Security Council, the security services are more consistent and effective in responding to threats and attacks. Such incidents have significantly declined, in particular thanks to the improved reorganization of the law-enforcement forces and the increased anticipation capacity of the intelligence services.

The second meeting of the consultative group on security sector reform, held on 3 April at the Office of the Prime Minister, facilitated the establishment of the Coordination Centre for Operational Decisions. The Centre has proved effective and useful by pursuing racketeering and by dismantling rebel barricades in the city of Abidjan, thereby improving the increasing control of the security situation. In addition, the senior commands of the national security forces and the municipal police have been reorganized. Similarly, a military planning law and a law on the administration and organization of national security are being drafted. All those efforts are aimed at establishing a national army.

Regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), the Authority on DDR has begun its activities. We welcome the skill and effectiveness demonstrated by Mr. Fidèle Sarassoro as the head of that structure. Indeed, the number of people involved in DDR is now known and is estimated at 64,500 ex-combatants. The Government is taking steps to complete the database of ex-combatants, which, once finalized, can be consulted by all potential donor partners.

A first tranche of 2,000 ex-combatants have been disarmed and demobilized and are being trained to reintegrate as prison guards. Under the same plan, a second tranche of 2,000 others is expected to be reintegrated into the customs administration and the border police. That skills training and the reintegration should be accelerated thanks to the support of international partners, whose highly appreciated contributions are welcomed by the Ivorian Government.

Moreover, in that context, on 11 April Prime Minister Kablan Duncan presided over a signing ceremony of an agreement between the post-crisis assistance and the DDR programmes. The agreement will facilitate the funding of DDR activities, in particular with regard to raising awareness for the acceptance of ex-combatants by host communities, on the one hand, and by economic actors, or potential employers, on the other. That financing will also help to prepare ex-combatants for their rehabilitation and reintegration into the socioeconomic fabric. It will also assist community infrastructure rehabilitation projects for the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants. Regarding the dozos, or traditional hunters, the census has started and is being undertaken jointly with the Ministry of Culture so that they can regain their cultural identity and traditions.

In terms of political dialogue and national reconciliation, dialogue with the opposition continues and is strengthening, in particular in the context of the permanent forum for dialogue. However, we must condemn the "empty chair" policy of the Front

populaire ivorien, which has just refused to take part in the local elections, scheduled for 21 April. Moreover, the current enthusiasm caused by the local elections affirms that the culture of democracy is irreversibly rooted in Ivorian society and strengthens the expression of individual freedoms.

Regarding national reconciliation, the Government, through Prime Minister Duncan, believes that "it is not an option but a common-sense obligation". The entire country is determined, with resolve and commitment, to dedicate the required energy to it. In that regard, the Government has undertaken to restore traditional chiefdoms so that they can play an increased role in conflict prevention, the preservation of social cohesion and reconciliation, in short, community peace, in particular in settling land disputes, given that a rural land reform law is being drafted.

With regard to justice and the fight against impunity, the National Commission of Inquiry on post-election events has submitted its conclusions. I would like to affirm that the judicial process has been initiated, in implementation of the recommendations, and that preliminary inquiries are under way. Justice is therefore taking place. However, it must be understood that the confidential inquiries require that we do not report further on that topic. In that connection, we would affirm the commitment of President Alassane Ouattara in the fight against impunity. Recently, during an official visit to Paris, he reiterated that "no one will be spared, but it will be at the pace of Ivorian justice, which is independent".

Regarding refugees, of the total 350,000 refugees two years ago, there remain only 60,000 today. Similarly, of the seven Ivorian refugee camps in Liberia, two have been closed and the remaining five are located along the border.

With regard to sexual violence, no new cases have been brought to the attention of the Government since 2012. That issue is given consideration not only in the overall context of the security sector reform but also by the ministries for justice, solidarity and women's affairs.

In economic terms, the signs of recovery are visible. Since the end of the post-election crisis, the entire country is under construction. Almost every month, we see construction work starting on bridges, roads, highways, hydroelectric dams, power plants and processing plants for agricultural products, to name but a few.

The national development plan for the period 2012-2015 reflects the great ambition of the President of the Republic to make Côte d'Ivoire an emerging country by 2020. To that end, the objective is to achieve strong and inclusive economic growth, of which investment is one of the pillars. We need to upgrade our economic and social infrastructure. It has become dilapidated and inadequate owing to a lack of maintenance during the long and difficult decade of crisis that our country has just experienced.

For the year 2012, the achievements are therefore much better than expected. The economic growth rate was 9.8 per cent, as compared with an initial forecast of 8.6 per cent. Continuing the efforts under way should allow us to achieve a growth rate of 9 per cent in 2013.

The redeployment of the mining administration to diamond-production areas is under way, and Côte d'Ivoire fully adheres to the Kimberley Process. A permanent representative office of the Kimberley Process in Côte d'Ivoire was established on 18 May 2012, and a focal point has been appointed. In that connection, Côte d'Ivoire participated in a meeting of the Kimberley Process, held in Washington, D.C., in June 2012.

In conclusion, regarding adjustments to the structure and troop strength of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, I would like to point out that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire believes that the current level of troops is good. However, if the planned reductions are to be implemented, my delegation would like the withdrawal of the Blue Helmets to be compensated for by the deployment of qualitative resources, such as surveillance drones in the border area between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.